Territorial Justice and Development in the World's Remote Regions: Drylands, Mountain Zones, and Oases.

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Remote territories worldwide, whether the great Sahara Desert in Africa, the highlands of the Himalayas, or the frozen deserts of the Arctic, share common challenges due to their isolation and their relatively peripheral locations on the globe. Indeed, many arid lands, mountain areas, oases, and generally numerous remote regions around the world remain marginalized and suffer from structural inequalities, despite their rich human, historical, natural, cultural heritage, and economic potential, particularly in renewable energies, ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, and blue economy (ocean and sea economy).

Territorial justice (spatial justice) must be an inherent pillar of efficient national public policy, as we cannot imagine an inclusively developed country without it meeting the minimal requirements for equity in economic opportunities and providing fair distribution of national wealth and resources to empower local communities.

Decentralization in such remote, rugged, and sometimes inaccessible regions naturally takes more effort and time than in urban centers. Therefore, plans and programs oriented toward deserts, mountains, oases, and even coastal areas must be established as integrated territorial development programs, and accompanied by a State policy independent of the government's electoral cycles, because enhancing connectivity of these territories requires deep, long-term State commitments that cannot be subjected to the volatility of short-term political agendas.

The concentration of political, economic, and scientific actors in large and metropolitan cities is the main obstacle to the adoption of efficient, context-specific policies. We should, among other, follow a strategy of administrative de-concentration and advanced regionalization with multi-level governance, simply by being in place via the relocation of key public administrations and sectors that will execute and supervise structural plans directly, to endow remote regions with suitable and tailored solutions that take into account their specificities and challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure and logistics, healthcare, education, digital connectivity, and climate change resilience and adaptation. This approach ensures that these promising regions are provided with expertise and qualified human resources, not to mention the pivotal role the private sector would play in investing in and developing key economic sectors in these territories.

In this context, Morocco has deployed sustained endeavors in territorial justice and development of its deserts and remote regions, for instance: the new development model for the southern provinces (NMDPS) devoted to the Moroccan Sahara desert; The rural development program for mountain areas (PDRZM); OASIS 2030 a development program for Moroccan Oases; the national coastal plan (PNL) oriented to sustainable development of coastal and littoral zones including coastal deserts such as the Atlantic Sahara.

As sustainable development is an ongoing process, further efforts are needed to reach genuine territorial cohesion and mitigate interregional socio-economic disparities within a country. This can only be achieved by strengthening solidarity mechanisms and increasing strategic partnerships and cooperation at all levels: national, North-South, South-South, and international.